

We appreciate the Committee's interest in the question of whether individuals were naturalized or received permanent residence status while they were subjects of foreign counterintelligence investigations and, in fact, we have indicated in conversations with Committee staff our belief that this likely occurred prior to September 11, 2001. We do not have data to support this view, but based upon our knowledge of how Bureau and then-Immigration and Naturalization Services systems interfaced, we do not dispute the premise.

This is serious. In other words, suspected terrorists most likely received citizenship or permanent residency in the country they swore to destroy because the FBI and the INS did not talk to each other. This is extraordinary.

During my negotiations with the Department of Justice, I had suggested the Privacy Act concern the Department raised could be dealt with if the FBI passed the sealed findings of their review through my committee which then could, in turn, pass the findings along to the BCIS. That wouldn't work, Justice said, because it would violate—you got it—their longstanding policy against providing information to Congress about investigations that did not result in prosecution.

If you think we have been driving around in circles, you are right. The Justice Department refuses to provide my oversight committee with information because of a "longstanding policy." We suggest a way around that longstanding policy, and the Department cites the Privacy Act. We suggest a way to avoid the Privacy Act concerns, and we find ourselves back to the longstanding policy.

This is simply unacceptable. We know some terrorists and supporters of terrorism seek out the protective guise of American citizenship. We know a lack of coordination between the relevant agencies allowed this unacceptable situation to occur. What we don't know is how many times it has happened, how broad this problem is, how many people are involved and, most important of all, what has been done to stop it, to close that communications gap.

The Committee on Governmental Affairs will pursue this matter by continuing its investigation. I have again written to the FBI Director to request the records needed by the committee. I have now focused my request on those individuals who were named in the NBC report. It is not a burdensome request. It is not an onerous request. It is a request that is very specific, time limited, and narrow in scope. There is no reason for the Department of Justice not to promptly turn over these documents to the committee.

I want to acknowledge those courageous FBI agents who wanted to do the right thing, tried to do the sensible thing, who said: Let's share this critical information, when they discovered suspected terrorists were trying to become American citizens or permanent residents. It is deeply disturbing that in some cases their supervisors did not

listen to them. It is deeply disturbing that bureaucracy trumped national security and common sense.

I invite those agents to step forward again to make their concerns known by contacting my committee. We will listen, and we will act.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SENATE PAGES

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, the other day the distinguished majority leader came to the floor to call attention to the special contribution made by a number of our pages who volunteered to stay beyond the time that was originally scheduled for their experience in the Senate. I wanted to join with him in expressing our heartfelt gratitude to each of those pages, not only those pages who stayed as volunteers but to those pages who have been with us this past session.

Pages play a very important role in the Senate. They are not only spectators to the democratic experiment, but they are real participants. Each of them becomes all the more adept at all of their responsibilities as the session unfolds and they become students of Government in a unique and special way.

I have always been an admirer of our pages because of the great job they do and the little attention they get. I hope they leave with an appreciation of Government.

When we have graduation for our pages, I oftentimes urge them to consider this the first installment of their public experience. I urge them to consider coming back, not only as members of the staff, but hopefully one day as elected Members themselves. I am absolutely confident at some point some will.

I will never forget Senator David Pryor, MARK PRYOR's father, telling the story that when he was a page he left a penny in the Capitol and promised himself he would come back and pick up that penny as an elected official. He did. I think it was a testament to the dreams, aspirations, and remarkable persistence that oftentimes our pages have.

As I noted, there are a number of pages who not only served the time that was expected of them but stayed on afterward to accommodate the elongated Senate schedule. Many others offered to stay, but because they had schedules that were in conflict were not able to. There are seven pages who stayed on until the last couple of days and in a couple of cases all the way up until today. Margaret Leddy, Melissa Meyer, Krista Warner, Yael Bortnick,

Emily Holmgren, Farrell Oxley, and Sarah Smith all went above and beyond the call of duty. They all have served the Senate in their capacity as pages superbly. I did not want this day or this session to end without publicly acknowledging their remarkable contribution, the quality with which they did their work and the gratitude we have for the job they did.

Yesterday was Melissa Meyer's birthday. I wish her a happy birthday besides, but to each of our pages—those who may still be here and those who have gone, those who served—again let me express on behalf of the entire Senate our heartfelt thanks, our best wishes for a happy holiday season, and, perhaps most importantly, our sincere wish that they come back again in some other capacity, because we need them.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HELP AMERICA VOTE ACT

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, earlier today I spoke briefly about the need to get our appropriations bills, many of which are now included in the so-called omnibus appropriations measure—some of us think it is an "ominous" appropriations measure—passed prior to the end of calendar year 2003. Among the things I pointed out were some very important measures. This body passed something called the Help America Vote Act, which I think focused attention on two very important problems. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle wanted to make sure we had up-to-date voting machines to make sure everyone who was entitled to vote could vote to remove barriers to voting. We supported that.

We also got support for something I thought was very important as well, and that was to stop the rampant fraud that has come back as a result of post-card registration.

I have the honor of representing an area that has probably the dubious distinction of being one of the vote fraud centers perhaps in the universe. The city of St. Louis, as I have said many times before, is famous for voting rolls clogged with people registered one, two, three, even four times; vacant lots with small cities worth of registered voters; and even my favorite dog, Ritzky Meckler, a 13-year-old Springer Spaniel who was registered there.

We have had some great theological experiences. For the last general election, a very prominent and outstanding alderman of the city of St. Louis registered to vote on the 10th anniversary of his death. It is a wonderful theological statement. It does not do much